

IOWA BIRD LIFE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE
IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

VOL. XII

SEPTEMBER, 1942

NO. 3



OFFICERS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

President—Dr. Martin L. Grant, Cedar Falls, Iowa
Vice-President—Ethan A. Hemsley, Dubuque, Iowa
Sec'y-Treas.—Miss Lillian Serbousek, 1226 Second St. S.W.,
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Librarian—Dr. Warren N. Keck, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Editor—Fred J. Pierce, Winthrop, Iowa

Executive Council:

Mrs. Mary L. Bailey, Sioux City, Iowa
Miss R. Lucile Loban, Waterloo, Iowa
Mrs. Myrle L. Jones, Hamburg, Iowa

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

Publications of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928; 'The Bulletin,' 1929-1930; 'Iowa Bird Life,' beginning 1931.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$1.00 a year (includes membership dues). Single copies 25c each. Claims for missing or defective copies of the magazine should be made within six months of date of issue. Keep the Editor informed of your correct address.

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE
WINTHROP, IOWA



WOOD DUCK LEAVING NESTING BOX

This photograph, taken by W. E. Albert, shows typical nesting environment among the islands of the Mississippi River. Those who are familiar with the speed with which these birds leave their nesting place will appreciate the difficulty in getting this 'shot'. This photograph and the accompanying article by Mr. Morf are taken from 'Iowa Conservationist' for July 15, 1942, and we are indebted to the Iowa Conservation Commission for permission to reproduce them here.

THE NESTING OF THE WOOD DUCK ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

By W. J. MORF
State Conservation Officer
DUBUQUE, IOWA

Up to about 1880, Wood Ducks were very numerous in the Mississippi Valley area, and they were considered a legitimate source of human food. Commercialization of game was an accepted practice, and on our prairies hosts of Prairie Chickens and Quail were taken with wing-nets and pens. Wood Ducks during those early days brought from \$1.50 to \$8.50 a dozen on the eastern markets. Captain Bogardus, a former champion U. S. wing shot, records in his book that his average daily kill of Wood Ducks was from 125 to 150. He hunted them principally in the Great Kankakee Swamp of southern Illinois during both the spring and fall.

Distinctly an inhabitant of the woodlands near water, the Wood Duck is almost unknown and unseen on the prairies. With a homing instinct comparable to that of the carrier pigeon, it returns year after year to rear its young in the same locality. It is exceedingly tenacious of its nesting sites, which are usually in the hollow cavity of a tree. Whether nesting near a summer cottage in the woods, or in the trees or nesting boxes on the lawns of the city dwellers along the Mississippi, no bird creates more interest or is given more encouragement and protection.

In the area along the Mississippi River extending from Dubuque to Savanna, Illinois, about 40 miles of shoreline, some 2,000 Wood Ducks nested this year. By observing them we find they readily adapt themselves to human surroundings, becoming almost fearless of familiar persons and easily distinguishing "local folks" from strangers in their haunts.

A pair of Wood Ducks that were under my continual observation nested in a cavity of an oak tree. They were about 100 yards from the Mississippi River—35 feet from the front door of a commercial fisherman's home, and 50 feet from a railroad track and the smoke and noise of passing trains.

The female worked on the nest for several days. The tree cavity, which had an opening of about 4 inches and a depth of about 2½ feet, was typical of the natural site the Wood Ducks select. The hen used both green and dry leaves for the base of her nest, then lined it with down plucked from her breast. With the nest finished, the female daily entered the cavity (adult Wood Ducks enter the nesting hollow on full wing with great speed, producing the illusion for the observer that they fly straight through or around the body of the tree), and remained in it from 15 to 30 minutes to lay. During this time the male remained constantly on guard on a nearby limb, his head moving back and forth in every direction watching to prevent intrusion.

The work at hand finished, both would leave to feed for the rest of the day, returning each morning until the full clutch of eggs were laid. Incubation lasted from 24 to 28 days, and near the end of this time both birds made many trips to the river, carefully exploring the ground, apparently looking for the least dangerous route to lead their young to water.

Formerly it was believed that the mother Wood Duck tossed the young out of the nesting cavity to the ground below. Recent motion pictures have been taken showing the method by which the young get out of the nest. The young are coaxed to the edge of the nest by the parent, then they pitch out into the air and spread their almost rudimentary wings and drop softly to the ground.

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS OF OTHER DAYS

PAUL BARTSCH

By MRS. H. J. TAYLOR
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

In the early days on our Wisconsin farm, after the Civil War, we children used to kill Red-heads and Yellow-hammers because they pecked holes in the trees; Blue Jays and Robins because they molested our cherries. Other birds we shot just for the fun of using the old musket that was sent to us after the Battle of Gettysburg where a relative was killed. We vied with one another to see who could get the largest collection of birds' eggs. The attic was full of strings of blown eggs. The coveted shells were those of the Bluebird, the Brown Thrasher, the Eagle, and the Shytepoke. (It is not so long ago that I learned that a "Shytepoke" is a Bittern). We also took delight in robbing the nests of birds. The loud and prolonged chatter of the birds told their protest but did not stop us.

In the spring of 1883, while I was a student at the University of Wisconsin, I first heard of such a thing as a "Bird Walk". The purpose, it seemed was not to rob nests and kill Robins. Later in the summer I attended Chautauqua held for the second time at Lake Monona, across from Madison, Wisconsin. While there I was invited, with others, to go on a Bird Walk and found that its object was to know and enjoy birds in their haunts. These walks, by the general public, were considered sentimental and those of us who joined them were smiled at as being "a little nutty." On that account many refused to go. For that same reason I went on only one Bird Walk. The phrase "Bird Walk" did have a sentimental flavor and it did not live very long.

The idea to know and to study birds in their haunts rather than the stuffed specimens took root and thrived. Field Trips soon took the place of Bird Walks. Field Trips called to the out-of-doors with congenial companions to hear, to see, and to know something of bird life. They grew in numbers and spread throughout the country. Today practically every community has its group of people interested in the out-of-doors and in knowing the wild life about them.

"Ornithology is essentially a study for amateurs, despite the wide spread tendency to pursue it as a profession," says Dr. Jean M. Linsdale of the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. Nevertheless, the active participation of professional scientists is an ingredient essential to its success. Among our distinguished professional contemporaries is the scientist Paul Bartsch.

The first time I saw Dr. Bartsch was at the annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club at Des Moines in 1929. When his name was called I thought only of Mollusks for I knew his name among scientists had come through his work in that branch of the animal kingdom. I knew nothing of his valuable studies in the field of Iowa ornithology. I had some data about him but no acquaintance with him. Wider knowledge of his work and acquaintance came later. It is his wider interests, particularly in Nature, that make his acquaintance so delightful and valuable to countless numbers. To him Nature is engrossing in every phase. Such interests are a splendid hobby to attach to the main line.

Paul Bartsch was born in Germany, August 14, 1871. He came to America as a boy, and Iowa became his adopted state. He graduated from the University of Iowa in 1896, receiving the B.S. degree. From the same university he received the M.S. degree in 1899, and the Ph.D. in 1905. He was Professor of Zoology in George Washington University from 1899 to 1939.

A pioneer bibliography of Iowa ornithology was prepared by Paul Bartsch and presented to the State University of Iowa as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in 1899. It was a complete record of published writings on the birds of Iowa up to that year, and consisted of three volumes of bound manuscript. The work consisted of two sections, the first listing all Iowa species with references to each arranged chronologically under it; the second was a bibliography citing all papers published each year from the time of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804 to the close of 1899. This early compilation has been of great value to other workers in ornithology in the ensuing years.

To read Bartsch's field notes is to go into the field with him. You see the trees and shrubs and bald rocks that he sees. You observe the birds that he observes. Through his vivid notes you become acquainted with the personality that enjoys and evaluates bird life. He knows birds and animals as he does people.

Paul Bartsch became interested in Mollusks soon after entering the University of Iowa. Whether he was aware at that time of the unnumbered relatives included in this, one of the largest branches of the animal kingdom, I can't say, but his efforts to know this family have taken him over the earth. He found Mollusks in the tops of tall trees in the Philippines and in the bottom of the Atlantic at its greatest depth—five and one-half miles below the surface of the water. Risk of life was forgotten in the ardent search for snails. On a very small island in the Caribbean Sea he discovered a small snail not found elsewhere in the world.

Wherever his search for snails took him he also observed bird life. His notes and skins have added valuable data and specimens to the Smithsonian Institution. As curator of Mollusks, he is surrounded by cases containing nearly 4 million shells of land and sea creatures at the U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.

To the Mollusk family belong slugs, snails, cuttlefish, clams, oysters, squids, and indeed everything that has or ever had a shell on its back. I cannot tell briefly the chief characteristics of the Mollusk family though the cyclopaedia has done it in four, fine print, pages.

Dr. Bartsch rendered unusual service in saving the lives of men in the first World War. Mustard gas that took its toll of men could not be detected until it had inflicted its deadly blow. Dr. Bartsch hit upon the slug as a detector. Its moist unprotected membrane responds instantly to the slightest presence of mustard gas. Snails at once went into the war with the men and told them when to put on their gas masks.

Burlington, the home of Bartsch, was the center of his ornithological studies so long as he remained in Iowa. In his notes entitled 'Camping on the Old Camp Grounds,'¹ Bartsch says: "In 1895, while working



DR. PAUL BARTSCH
Curator, Divisions of Mollusks and Cenozoic
Invertebrates, United States National Museum,
Washington, D. C.

¹Osprey, Vol. V, 1901, p. 99.

up the fall flora of the lower Skunk River Valley, I selected this gem of an island [Dollar Island] as a basis from which to direct my researches. I planted my tent on the 1st of August, and pulled up stakes October 22. It was one of the most delightful outings that I have ever experienced. . . . The island is small, to be sure, [one-fourth of a mile in diameter and round as a dollar] but its diminutive size and isolation have retained for it most of its primitive forest; tall gigantic sycamores and elms, which cause one to dream of by-gone days. . . . It forms a capital place for the study of the migration of aquatic birds. . . . Dollar Island . . . furnishes unrivaled opportunities for the ornithologist."

Eighty-three days alone with the birds, animals, and trees—uninterrupted by telephone, automobile, friends, or business, Bartsch was where he wanted to be. He loved and understood Nature's children. Here were land birds, shore birds, and water birds of which he listed about 60 species in 83 days.

Bartsch's study of Iowa birds added rare and unusual specimens to her ornithological records. On the sand-bar above Burlington he collected two immature specimens of Sabine's Gull. The male he shot on the 15th of October, 1891. The female he took on October 12th, 1894. Of these specimens Rudolph M. Anderson in his *Birds of Iowa* says: "These I believe are the first records of this species for Iowa. The specimens are deposited at the University at Iowa City." For his contributions to Iowa ornithology the State is proud of its adopted son.

When Bartsch left Iowa to go to Washington, D. C., he and the birds of the Rock Creek region became well acquainted. He calls Rock Creek Park "a place fit for the gods" and adds that its thickets must be left for the birds; not destroyed to make it easy for humans to walk leisurely and unhampered.

His evaluation of these birds I can never forget. He says:² "While we were admiring the alar expanse of the California Condor, who held his shivering pinions wide stretched to the rays of the morning sun, I counted no less than ten species of our native birds. . . . These birds, together with the Kinglets flitting about in the pines, have the care-taking of the trees and shrubs of the Park. . . . Each one of them has his special line of pursuit. . . . The little busy, ever-joyous Kinglet gleams from the pines and evergreens that which to him is food. . . . he traverses many and many a tree within his beat each day. . . . The Creeper seeks the many little vermins that have established themselves upon, or within the crevices of the bark. . . . and his long slender curved bill aids in their extraction. . . . His working hours seem but one continuous feast; from dawn till dark he is hungry. . . . The Downy, of much . . . slower motion . . . goes deeper in the business, and . . . seeks the larvae which are beneath the bark . . . while the Nuthatch occupies an intermediate position among these winter laborers. . . . The woodpecker and the Creeper . . . back down. With them it is always a question of right-side-up with care, while the Nuthatch feels just as free moving head forward down a tree as up. [The sphere of] the Chickadee and the Titmouse . . . is more properly that of the branches. . . . These birds all love companionship and you will usually see a mixed band move about [in] their range . . . each announcing his presence to his fellow journeymen by his characteristic note."

Dr. Bartsch's interest and study of birds extended over the country and around the world. When Elliott Coues, Editor of 'The Osprey,' died at the close of the year 1899 Paul Bartsch became its Associate Editor.

In a letter to the Editor of 'Iowa Bird Life' in 1932 Dr. Bartsch said: "I am hoping some day to spend another spring and fall, and possibly a summer, in my old stamping ground and note the changes which have come over the avifauna in the district about Burlington, the adjacent Illinois territory and the region about Iowa City. These

²Osprey, Vol. V. November and December, 1900, pp. 19-20.

are not at all slight, but decidedly pronounced, for such birds as the Tufted Titmouse, the Carolina Wren and the Hooded Warblers were practically absent or so rare that they were almost non-existent at Burlington in my collecting days, and now they are the common birds of the region. The Prothonotary Warbler, on the other hand, was almost the commonest of our breeding warblers, and now it is pushed far to the north. So I want to take stock again before I cash in, and call attention to the findings of today as contrasted with those recorded in my journals of the long ago."

We need to know those about us who are making vital contributions in our time. Such acquaintance is a source of enlarging and enriching life. It vitalizes action. Those who do things by head or by hand give expression to life and create interests which may extend into the future. Shakespeare and Browning, whose lives are indelibly expressed in plays and poems, are more widely known today than when they walked the earth. This will be true of many who are living today.

Time evaluates but so should we. Paul Bartsch has expressed his life richly in several fields. Not only in the branch of ornithology, but also in the field of science, enlarged and enriched by his study of Mollusks, the name of Paul Bartsch will live.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT WAUBONSIE

By MYRLE L. JONES

Custodian, Waubonsie State Park
HAMBURG, IOWA

Waubonsie State Park, midway between Sidney and Hamburg and in the extreme southwest corner of both Fremont County and the state of Iowa, was acquired as a park area in 1926. The park is composed of high ridges and loess bluffs, with deep, scenic, well-wooded valleys. The flora includes many plants typical of the southwestern United States, such as cactus, yucca, paw-paw and others. The region is attractive to wildlife, and the bird-fauna is represented by many species both resident and migrant. Below are given some of my observations on birds in 1942.

EASTERN BOB-WHITE, *Colinus virginianus virginianus*. While the Bob-white was formerly abundant in this region, it is not now found within a mile of any of the park area. Twenty years ago they were extremely numerous along what is now the west boundary of Waubonsie Park; but the grubbing out of the Osage orange hedge-rows together with drainage ditches and intensive cultivation has so completely destroyed their type of environment that repeated stocking attempts have all failed. The local warden reports at least two coveys within five miles of the state park, but there seems to be no satisfactory increase.

ARKANSAS KINGBIRD, *Tyrannus verticalis*. One individual was observed on May 13 within the park. At least three others have been seen outside the park but within the county since that time. Two of these observations were during July.

TUFTED TITMOUSE, *Baeolophus bicolor*. One of our most common permanent residents, probably more abundant than the Chickadee.

CATBIRD, *Dumetella carolinensis*. The writer had previously assumed that the Catbird would be found in considerable numbers in any state park. Experiences at Waubonsie have proved this to be incorrect. Only one Catbird was observed in the park during the spring and summer season. That was during the spring migration. There seems to be no lack of suitable habitat, yet Catbirds were not to be found in or near the picnic area or elsewhere within the park.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER, *Poliophtila caerulea caerulea*. Fairly common within the park area. On May 3, 1942, a nest was found. Incubation had started.

BELL'S VIREO, *Vireo belli belli*. A common summer resident where

the environment is suitable. At least 12 pairs were located, three pairs within the park boundaries. They were especially numerous on the Missouri bottoms where the writer located nine singing individuals within a few minutes.

KENTUCKY WARBLER, *Oporornis formosus*. Fairly common although confined to two general areas within the park. One area, a valley sloping to the north of the custodian's residence and dotted with paw-paw groves, contained at least three pairs. The other, the picnic area, was inhabited also by three pairs. In this area they were confined to smaller valleys emptying into the one broad valley making up the main picnic area.

The Kentucky Warbler could be heard at almost any time during the day in various parts of the picnic area. It seemed interesting to contrast this with the complete absence of Catbirds which one would expect to find in considerable numbers.

One Kentucky Warbler sang persistently during the spring and early summer months within hearing of the custodian's residence. The song seemed to suggest the words, "wheatee, wheatee, wheatee, wheatee, wheatee." When heard at close range it seemed to begin with the last syllable of the word—"tee-whea"—but as the song continued it seemed to fit perfectly the word "wheatee", uttered five times. Some writers say that the song of the Kentucky Warbler suggests the words, "turtle, turtle, turtle, turtle," but the word just doesn't seem to lend itself to such an adaptation.

It would seem that the Kentucky Warblers would remain on their nesting grounds until late summer, but they were not seen or heard after the latter part of July.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT, *Icteria virens virens*. Rare. Probably as common here as it would be anywhere within its range. Two pairs were located within the park area. One pair was under observation at regular intervals and water was provided for them. At no time during the spring or summer did they fail to announce their whereabouts when their thicket was invaded, but no nest was located. One of the chats was trapped and banded on August 15, 1942.

ORCHARD ORIOLE, *Icterus spurius*. Fairly common. If the Orchard Oriole is more common in any other part of Iowa, the writer is not aware of it.

SCARLET TANAGER, *Piranga erythromelas*. Fairly common summer resident of the heavily wooded areas of the region. At least four pairs were known by location in the park.

SUMMER TANAGER, *Piranga rubra rubra*. According to DuMont's 'Birds of Iowa' the Summer Tanager has not been recorded for Iowa since 1906. He also mentions that there are no recent records for northern Missouri.

The writer had previously observed Summer Tanagers in considerable numbers in central Missouri but had hardly expected to find them so abundant even this far south in Iowa.

The Summer Tanager was first observed at Waubonsie on April 27, 1942. After this date they were found in all portions of the park where the habitat was suitable. They were at least as numerous as the Scarlet Tanager, four or five pairs having been located. One pair stayed close to the custodian's residence all summer where the male was heard almost daily. The song was much like that of the Scarlet Tanager in tone but more hesitant. While the song of the Scarlet Tanager is all run together, that of the Summer Tanager is broken up into phrases. The notes seem to fit the words, "See me?—Come here!" or "See me?—See me come here!"

EASTERN LARK SPARROW, *Chondestes grammacus grammacus*. The Lark Sparrow seems to find the upland wild prairie of the loess bluffs an ideal nesting habitat for they are abundant. Probably a dozen pairs could be located on a square mile area.

NOTES ON A CAPTIVE SCREECH OWL

By MARTIN L. GRANT

Iowa State Teachers College
CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

On June 17, 1941, my attention was called by a neighbor to a family of four immature Screech Owls in a tree in Cedar Falls. Apparently they had just left their nesting hole. A fifth one was found a short distance away inside a large empty garbage can, into which it had apparently fallen, and this rufous individual has now been maintained in captivity for over 13 months. Fig. 1 shows the bird a month after capture (July 20), and Fig. 2 at the age of a year (May 27, 1942).

The owl has readily eaten small animals of all types which have been offered it, including crawfish, June beetles, frogs, mice, immature rats, bats, sparrows, and other small birds, but has shown no ability to tear up larger specimens. A large rat, for example, was untouched until I cut it open, after which all disappeared except the skin and some of the larger bones. The principal article of diet through the year, however, has been pork liver and hamburger, the former being the more greatly relished.

Tootoo, as he (or she) has been named, is kept in a large wire cage, and seems not to suffer from the confinement. Frequently, at least once a day, it is allowed the freedom of the house, but is usually content to fly to a high perch and sit there, watching whatever is going on. It will stare out the window for long periods. Recently (late July) it has been moulting and has practically lost interest in flying.

His reactions to human residents of the household depend largely on his physiological state. When he is hungry, an approach by one of us is greeted with a soft low cooing sound. If satisfied, and food is offered him, he snaps his beak lightly as though in boredom. The most frequent response, however, when we come near his cage, is an angry hissing given with the mouth open. He will allow himself to be petted and handled, though usually under mild protest.

Strangers provoke a reaction that is apparently a mixture of astonishment, hate, and fear. He fluffs out his feathers, lowers his ear-tufts, and stretches one or both wings out and down to its full length, while slowly and silently weaving sideways on his perch. Puppets, mops, large pieces of cloth, etc., elicit the same response, and so do all larger animals. A Bittern brought into the room almost threw him into



SCREECH OWL PORTRAITS

Fig. 1 (left) shows the owl a month after capture. Beside it is a white rat. Fig. 2 shows the bird at the age of one year.

convulsions, but his strongest negative reaction was reserved for an immature Red-shouldered Hawk, at which Tootoo delivered a loud piercing whining cry, entirely different from any note I have ever heard him utter. He repeated this several times a minute over a period of several days whenever he could see the hawk. This fear reaction would usually stop if we would open his cage and let him fly up to some high vantage point, from which he apparently felt more secure.

The quavering tremulo so frequent with wild Screech Owls is not delivered very often, though twice our owl has responded with it to the calls of other individuals of the same species which he has heard through the open window. A shortened form of it has frequently been elicited by a human sneeze.

Until he was about eight months old Tootoo used to exercise himself by bobbing up and down and sideways on his perch, with the feet remaining in position. At times he would roll his head in a circle while keeping the head vertical and the eyes fixed forward. As he grew older the only form of exercise he retained was that of hopping back and forth from one perch to another, or down on the floor of the cage and back to the perch.

I have never seen owls in the wild take a bath, but this one does so quite regularly. The stimulus is the cleaning out of the cage, and whenever it is supplied with fresh paper in the bottom and fresh water in the pan Tootoo hops in and splashes himself much like any other bird.

EXPLORING THE MARSH¹

By RICHARD GILLESPIE

If one wishes to make his bird trips interesting in the summer, he should put on a pair of hip-boots and explore a marsh. This calls for several things: first, a marsh; second, the boots; and third, no great fear of reptiles that may possibly be encountered. Of course, it also calls for endurance, for it is no weakling's job to wallow around in the cattails and bulrushes. However, when one has the necessary equipment, the satisfaction obtained far outweighs the cost.

To me the marsh is always a mystery. I never can feel sure that there isn't something just ahead that will be of great interest. Perhaps it will be a group of nests of the Prairie Marsh Wren, built with fine workmanship of coarser materials, usually with peaked roof. One may first think that he has found a colony of wrens, but close inspection will make him wise. The noisy little pair can almost lead him to believe there are many of them as they sputter and flit about, now here, now there, all around him. This bird has the habit of making many nests, and a novice may be fooled into thinking that all these vacant, make-believe homes represent a colony of wrens. Near the edge of the swamp one may find the nest of the Short-billed Marsh Wren. This nest is round and rather tightly woven with an almost imperceptible opening on one side; this opening is partially closed with a soft woolly substance which probably deceives the enemy.

Then, again, in one of those secluded ponds which are a part of every marsh, one may come unexpectedly upon a family or two—it may be Coot, Rail or some other bird, depending on the location. I have found ducks of various kinds; sometimes the ducklings were following the parent birds, sometimes the adult bird was waiting patiently for the families to appear from incubated eggs. I have found Pintails,

¹Our editorial policy of publishing only Iowa material has been somewhat relaxed this year when suitable copy is not always at hand. These notes were made in the Bay City, Michigan, region in the summer of 1932, and have remained unpublished in the Editor's file since that time. Mr. Gillespie lived at Waterloo, Iowa, from 1924 to 1928 and was an instructor in a commercial college there during those years. His interest in Iowa and its bird life became well rooted during his Iowa residence. He died in 1934.—Ed.

Mallards, Black Ducks, Shovellers and Blue-winged Teal; on one occasion Wilson's Phalaropes. Coots can usually be heard, as their peculiar grunty quacks echo over the marsh and their families scurry to greater seclusion. Gallinules utter a harsh "kuk" which one becomes familiar with in their haunts. If the Rails seem to be scarce, the Black-crowned Night Herons make up for all loss. They seem to be on the increase and in a few years they should be one of the commonest sights of the lake and marsh regions. The air at dusk is filled with their throaty "quocks".

Another very interesting find has been the Black Terns' nest. They are rather easily found, for the birds in their demonstrations give away the location; but sometimes the nests are hard to see. Their choice of nesting site is frequently an old muskrat house, rotted almost to the point of submersion. If you were to step on it, it would disappear under the lily pads. The straw of which it was built has become dark blackish brown. On the highest part, if your eyes are good, you may see three eggs, quite similar in color to the straw of the nest. I was almost ready to think myself deceived when I visited my first nest, and probably would have gone away if it had not been for the owners and all their neighbors whirling and shrieking around my head. In size the eggs were about as large as pigeon eggs but more pointed. The shell was extremely thin, so as to "give" on lifting the eggs. When the fluffy little terns came along they also were colored like the nest, and unless they moved they were almost invisible. All this is more interesting to me than the migration of the birds, much as I enjoy that season.

One evening in September Dr. and Mrs. Slawson called for me in rather an excited state of mind. They had been down the river road and had found two American Egrets, which they very much wished me to see. We obtained a long-distance view of them that evening, but it was not quite satisfactory. On the following Saturday morning I made an early trip, equipped to tramp anywhere. After a long tedious struggle through marsh growth, frequently higher than my head and saturated with dew, I reached the sanctum sanctorum of the marsh and shore birds. My clothes were as saturated as the marsh growth and my boots were not water-tight by about a gallon each. At intervals I had come upon many birds—Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs, Pectoral Sandpipers, Sora Rail, Spotted Sandpipers, Wilson's Snipes, Killdeer, and a few Black Ducks, Blue-winged Teal and Black-crowned Night Herons. Just before reaching the inner sanctum I came within 20 feet of a Solitary Sandpiper. I waved my arms at it but it just bobbed its head in acknowledgment of my presence and stayed there, seemingly quite unafraid, so I went on my way.

As I broke through the last of the tall rushes, 50 or more Black-crowned Night Herons took to the air with loud unpleasant squawks.



RICHARD GILLESPIE IN 1931
Reprinted from 'Iowa Bird Life', June, 1934,
p. 23.

Many Black Ducks, Blue-winged Teals, a few Great Blue Herons and many smaller birds were with them. Somewhat astonished, I had stopped to watch their confused departure, but before I had proceeded ten feet farther, another 50 or more Night Herons rose with still greater noise. Soon I estimated that nearly 1000 birds were circling about, all protesting loudly against my intruding on their private domain. Out of the confused squawking and quacking mass came two beautiful American Egrets. I did not see from what point they had arisen, but they came straight as arrows toward me, not circling as the others had done. After passing over my head at a height of 35 to 40 feet, they turned and came back, then as if satisfied with their view of the marsh, they disappeared to the south. I continued for nearly a half mile farther, after which the egrets again came toward me, quite low. This time their curiosity seemed greater, for they silently circled several times and alighted about 100 yards away. They are beautiful birds in their autumn plumage, pure white with yellow beak and black legs. When standing, they look almost as large as the Great Blue Heron, but when flying they appear smaller. I wished that I had been equipped to take moving pictures of what I saw, as the film would have shown about a dozen species of birds at once, in a great confused flight.

GENERAL NOTES

Bird Notes Made on an A. E. F. Atlantic Crossing and in Ireland.—May 10, 1942. We are "somewhere in the North Atlantic", though we shall be safely landed at "our destination" by the time this letter is received. I am interested in the sea birds which I have seen. They are hard for me to identify, since I have only read about or seen pictures of most of them. Most amazing are the Dovekies, little birds not ten inches long, that float about on the waves as happy as you please miles from any sight of land. Most beautiful are the Gannets, fairly large white birds with black-tipped wings, that just skim the waves, disappearing from view as they glide into the trough between the waves.

May 13, 1942. We are now settled in northern Ireland. This country is very picturesque. The topography is similar to that in Iowa—around Cresco, north of Marshalltown, or along the Mississippi. It is very green and rather damp. The farms have hedges around them instead of fences. Rather interesting are the peat beds. The peat is cut into squares about the size of bricks and are stacked or corded up to dry. I have seen a number of birds new to me, a very few of which I can identify. The Magpie seems to be quite common and I have seen a number of their large nests in the trees. The bird is very similar to the American Magpie of the western states. The European Starling and the English Sparrow are common here. Rooks or Ravens are very numerous. This species is smaller than our Crow in Iowa, but they make a similar noise. The plants are rather new to me, of course. A species of beech, similar to the beech in eastern U. S., is rather numerous. I also saw some dandelions in bloom. A striking phenomenon is the increase in the length of the day, which accompanies our new, higher latitude.

May 28, 1942. The woods are full of singing birds. Several days ago I saw a Loon swimming on a lake that I happened to be passing. It dived several times and finally came up with a fish that was at least six inches long. These birds can swim fast enough to catch fish, and they have been caught in nets 80 feet below the surface.—PVT. ROBERT A. PIERCE, (home address) Nashua, Iowa.

(As a member of the Nashua Boy Scout troop Robert Pierce developed an interest in bird study. He is a member of a medical detachment with the Expeditionary Force in Ireland. He received his military training at Camp Claibourne, Louisiana, after being called by selective service a year or more ago.—Ed.)

Summer Bird Notes from Western Iowa.—A male Mockingbird stayed on the J. A. Sturtevant farm in Plymouth County during the last two weeks of May and first half of June, 1942, and gave his beautiful song constantly. We looked for his mate and once thought we saw a second bird in a plum thicket, but we thought if they were nesting we shouldn't disturb them; as a result we didn't ever determine whether the second bird was a female. The male stayed in the vicinity until June 15 and was not seen after that date. This is the same farm where I collected the first authentic Western Blue Grosbeak for Iowa (recorded in Wilson Bull., 1934, p. 257).

I saw two Lark Buntings within the city limits of Sioux City during early May of 1942. Lark Buntings are not uncommon 50 miles west of Sioux City, and they are common 100 miles west, along with many Bobolinks. I have noted numerous flocks of from 5 to 50 Cedar Waxwings at various times through this past summer. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were scarce this year. Although our back yard is a veritable bower of flowers, I did not see the first hummingbird of the season until August 5. Across the street from our home Starlings nested in an old barn. They have spread tremendously in South Dakota and are common all over the eastern half of that state.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

On June 13 Miss Margaret F. Kohlman and Ivan L. Boyd were married at Dubuque. Miss Kohlman was an art and science teacher at Fulton school, Dubuque. Mr. Boyd is head of the biology dept. of Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas. This might be called an ornithological romance, since the couple met at an Iowa Ornithologists' Union convention a few years ago. Congratulations!

RECENT BIRD BOOKS

ORNITHOLOGISTS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS, by Edgar Erskine Hume (John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Md., 1942; cloth, pp. i-xxv+1-583, with 110 illustrations; price, \$5).

Those who enjoy the historical and biographical angles of ornithology have a fertile field in which to browse. The work of the pioneer ornithologists dates back to the early periods of our American history, and many of their experiences were linked with the stirring events of the times. Though the multiplicity of ornithological writing of the present day is something to marvel at, biographical material has not been over-abundant, and we therefore welcome this new volume which deals with the lives of those rugged medical officers who found time to pursue their avocation of bird study.

Perhaps it is not generally known that some of the pioneer workers in natural science were medical corps surgeons of the United States Army. When the Army was fulfilling its rather difficult role of conquering the great territorial region extending from the Mississippi River to the Pacific, the personnel included a number of medical officers who were well-educated and interested in birds. These men in their leisure found unrivalled opportunities to study bird life in vast new regions then unexplored by white men. They made the most of such opportunities and laid a solid foundation on which subsequent workers have built our western ornithology. Among the most fruitful fields were those provided by the Pacific Railroad Surveys in the 1850's, in which the War Department undertook the task of finding the best route from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean. Adequate naturalist service in the persons of Army medical officers and full equipment were provided for these extensive expeditions. The results of the surveys fill some dozen or more ponderous quarto volumes in which the birds, animals and other natural history objects are given ample treatment. In those days the Wild West was all that the name implies. Encounters with Indians, big-game hunting, and dangerous adventures of all kinds were part of the daily existence. During the latter part of the nine-

teenth century, as well, the medical naturalists through careful field studies left their mark on our ornithology.

The author, himself a colonel in the Medical Corps of the United States Army, has made thorough research and gives us a very carefully prepared volume. He has written biographies of 36 men. The life of each one is well-rounded and interesting. Lengthy quotations from the writings of these men are occasionally included and help further to depict their work and thought. Data gleaned from the archives of the Army Medical Corps are made public for the first time. Some of the men are well known in the annals of ornithology—such names as Bendire, Cooper, Coues, Mearns and Shufeldt. Others are not so familiar but their lives are not less interesting and provide fascinating reading. The large collection of portraits is a valuable feature, while the pictures of the old Army posts are of interest. A good index completes the volume. The general reader of history and biography will enjoy the book, but in the ornithological library it is a valuable contribution to the literature.—F. J. P.

MEMBERSHIP ROLL OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION*

CHARTER MEMBERS (1923)

Bailey, Mrs. Mary L., Sioux City	Palas, Arthur J., Postville
Banning, R. H., Cresco	Pierce, Fred J., Winthrop
Battell, Mrs. F. L., Ames	Sherman, Miss Althea R., National
Bennett, Walter W., Los Angeles, Calif.	Stephens, Dr. T. C., Sioux City
Kinnaird, Mrs. W. A., West Des Moines	Wendelburg, Mrs. Toni R., Des Moines
Mills, Wier R., Pierson	Wolden, B. O., Estherville

MEMBERS

Adams, I. C., Jr., Maysville, Mo., 1941	Baumgartner, Miss Jo, Des Moines, 1942
Allert, Oscar P., McGregor, 1929	Becker, Miss Hilda, Davenport, '26
Anderson, Dr. Rudolph M., Ottawa, Canada, 1942	Beckwith, Miss Alma, Atlantic, '39
Austin, Dr. O. L., Tuckahoe, N. Y., 1931	Bice, Mrs. Don C., Atlantic, 1942
Austin, Mrs. E. J., Charles City, 1942	Binsfeld, Mrs. A. J., Des Moines, 1939
Ayres, Charles C., Jr., Ottumwa, 1941	Birkeland, Henry, Roland, 1933
Baker, Walter, Ottumwa, 1939	Bishop, Dr. Louis B., Pasadena, Calif., 1934
Barlow, Mrs. John, Waterloo, '42	Bliese, John, Cedar Falls, 1935
Bartlett, Wesley H., Eagle Grove, 1935	Blosser, Mrs. Noah J., Patterson, 1927
	Bordner, Mrs. Frances, Iowa City, 1929

*Complete to August 20, 1942. Year of joining the Union follows the name of each member. All cities are within Iowa unless otherwise noted. Junior Members are initialed "J.M." Corrections in the list will be appreciated.

DISTRIBUTION IN IOWA BY COUNTIES

Allamakee, 2	Dallas, 1	Henry, 1	Page, 1
Benton, 7	Des Moines, 5	Howard, 1	Polk, 16
Black Hawk, 19	Dickinson, 3	Jefferson, 3	Pottawattamie, 1
Boone, 2	Dubuque, 11	Johnson, 3	Scott, 5
Buchanan, 3	Emmet, 3	Keokuk, 3	Story, 7
Cass, 5	Floyd, 3	Lee, 1	Tama, 1
Cerro Gordo, 1	Franklin, 1	Linn, 20	Wapello, 2
Clay, 1	Freemont, 2	Lyon, 2	Webster, 2
Clayton, 3	Grundy, 1	Madison, 1	Woodbury, 9
Crawford, 1	Hamilton, 1	Marshall, 2	Wright, 1
	Hardin, 1	O'Brien, 1	

Iowa total, 159
Outside of Iowa, 38
Grand total, 197

- Boyd, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan L., Baldwin, Kans., 1937
 Buchanan, Borden C., Sioux City, 1941
 Burk, Walter L., Vinton, 1931
 Buzby, Mr. and Mrs. Wm., Boone, 1932 and 1929
 Chadbourne, Dr. T. L., Vinton, '38
 Clark, Mrs. Ella L., Burlington, '25
 Confare, Miss Miriam, Cedar Rapids, 1942
 Copp, Miss C. Esther, Cedar Rapids, 1933
 Crabb, Dayle N., Dubuque, 1942
 Crabb, Wilfred D., Ames, 1937
 Currier, Ed. S., Portland, Ore., '34
 Cuthbert, N. L., Mt. Pleasant, '42
 Dales, Mrs. Marie, Sioux City, '29
 Davis, Floyd H., Des Moines, '42
 DeLong, Mrs. W. C., Sigourney, '39
 Dix, Mrs. Ray S., Cedar Falls, '35
 Dole, J. Wilbur, Fairfield, 1929
 Downing, Glenn R., Iowa City, '38
 Drago, Lavina, Cedar Rapids, '29
 Dubuque Bird Club, Dubuque, '33
 DuMont, Mrs. Janet, Des Moines, 1927
 DuMont, Philip A., Arlington, Va., 1924
 Eastman, Mrs. E. P., Burlington, 1929
 Edgar, Mrs. G. P., Burlington, '39
 Edge, Mrs. C. N., New York, N. Y., 1931
 Eiler, Mrs. Burness W., Cedar Falls, 1940
 Ellis, Ralph, Jr., Berkeley, Calif., 1933
 Emigh, A. A., Atlantic, 1941
 Ennis, Dr. J. H., Mt. Vernon, '41
 Errington, Dr. Paul L., Ames, '32
 Faulkner, Geo. O., Waterloo, 1931
 Ficke, Mrs. C. A., Davenport, 1929
 Flodin, Mrs. C. C., Cedar Rapids, 1931
 Frankel, Mrs. Henry, Des Moines, 1925
 Funk, Miss Ruth F., Independence, 1940
 Ganier, Albert F., Nashville, Tenn., 1931
 Goodman, John, Fairfield, '41
 Graesing, Howard, U. S. Army, '39
 Grant, Dr. Martin L., Cedar Falls, 1937
 Gross, Dr. Alfred O., Brunswick, Maine, 1942
 Grupp, Mrs. Mabel, Waterloo, '42
 Guthrie, Richard A., Woodward, 1939
 Hallowell, Miss Loraine, Waterloo, 1932
 Hanson, Mrs. Ernest W., Burlington, 1936
 Hantelmann, Salina, Waterloo, '40
 Harlan, James R., Des Moines, '42
 Hathorn, Glen M., Cedar Rapids, 1934
 Hemsley, Ethan A., Dubuque, '36
 Hendrickson, Dr. Geo. O., Ames, 1931
 Heuer, Ralph, Davenport, 1940
 Heuser, E. P., Dubuque, 1940
 Hicks, Dr. Lawrence E., Columbus, Ohio, 1938
 Horn, Miss Leila, South English, 1942
 Hoskinson, Mrs. Helen H., Clarinda, 1940
 Hoiman, Miss Isabelle, Cedar Rapids, 1942
 Huebsch, Fred, Jr., McGregor, '41
 Johnson, Clifford O., Dubuque, '41
 Johnson, Mrs. Martin A., Union, '41
 Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. R. W., Dubuque, 1939 and 1927
 Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Myrle L., Hamburg, 1931 and 1941
 Keck, Dr. Warren N., Cedar Rapids, 1936
 Kent, Mrs. Wm., Cedar Rapids, '32
 King, Mrs. Helen G., Grundy Center, 1933
 Klinker, Mrs. P. J., Denison, 1937
 Knapp, George R., Vinton, 1940
 Knoop, Miss Pearl, Marble Rock, 1937
 Kubichek, Wesley F., Arlington, Va., 1941
 Laffoon, Jean, Sioux City, 1940
 LaGrange, Bob, Vinton, 1938
 Lahr, Miss Margaret, Cedar Rapids, 1942
 Lambert, Mrs. Howard T., Hampton, 1940
 Laude, Dr. P. P., Iowa City, 1942
 Lincoln High School, Vinton, '38
 Lloyd, Monte, Sioux City, 1942 (J. M.)
 Loban, Miss Myra E., Waterloo, '38
 Loban, Miss R. Lucile, Waterloo, 1938
 Ludeman, Mrs. Geo. R., Mason City, 1939
 MacMartin, Mrs. W. G., Tama, '32
 Mallette, Bob, Atlantic, 1942
 Mathis, Miss Grace, Elkhart, '42
 McCabe, Miss Olivia, Des Moines, 1932
 McCartney, Mrs. R. C., Charles City, 1942

- McDonald, Malcolm, Fairfield, '35
 Melcher, Rev. M. C., Central City, 1939
 Meltvedt, Burton W., Paullina, '31
 Meyer, Dr. Alfred W., Cedar Rapids, 1942
 Michael, Maude, Waterloo, 1942
 Miller, Hilda E., Waterloo, 1942
 Moeran, E. H., Yonkers, N. Y., '40
 Moorman, Robert, Ames, 1941
 Morrissey, Thos. J., Davenport, '40
 Moser, Dr. R. Allyn, Omaha, Nebr., 1941
 Mote, Mr. and Mrs. G. A., Marshalltown, 1929
 Murley, Miss Margaret, Ames, '37
 Musgrove, Jack Warren, Des Moines, 1938
 Myers, Mrs. Len, Waterloo, 1939
 Nichols, Harvey L., Waterloo, '29
 Nyc, Fred F., Jr., Laredo, Tex., '42
 Oberholser, Dr. Harry C., Cleveland, Ohio, 1932
 Orr, Ellison, Waukon, 1935
 Osher, Mrs. J. B., Estherville, '39
 Parsons, Mrs. Robt. O., Dickens, 1942
 Peasley, Mrs. H. R., Des Moines, 1934
 Peel, Clarence O., Dayton, 1941
 Petranek, Mr. and Mrs. E. J., Cedar Rapids, 1931
 Pettingill, Dr. O. S., Northfield, Minn., 1937
 Pierce, Robert A., U. S. Army, '41
 Rector, Harry E., Independence, 1942
 Rich, Dr. Guy C., Hollywood, Calif., 1931
 Roberts, Dr. and Mrs. F. L. R., Spirit Lake, 1924 and 1926
 Roberts, Dr. T. S., Minneapolis, Minn., 1931
 Rosene, Walter, Jr., Gadsden, Ala., 1942
 Ross, Hollis T., Lewisburg, Pa., '40
 Ruegnitz, Mrs. R. S., Dubuque, '42
 Ruhr, Eugene, Atlantic, 1941
 Safourek, Miss Lorene, South English, 1942
 Sage, Evan, Waterloo, 1942
 Sanders, Dr. Earl, Long Beach, Calif., 1940
 Schramm, Frank H., Burlington, 1934
 Schuster, Miss Ival M., Dubuque, 1941
 Scott, Dr. Thos. G., U. S. Army, '37
 Serbousek, Miss Lillian, Cedar Rapids, 1931
 Sherwood, Jack W., Salinas, Calif., 1936
 Starr, Frank M., Milford, '42
 Steffen, Miss Emily, Cedar Rapids, 1942
 Steffen, E. W., Cedar Rapids, '42
 Stiles, Bruce F., Des Moines, 1937
 Stoner, Dr. Dayton, Albany, N. Y., 1937
 Struck, Dr. K. H., Davenport, '29
 Sutton, Dr. George M., Ithaca, N. Y., 1941
 Taylor, Mrs. H. J., Berkeley, Calif., 1939
 Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. O. S., Rock Rapids, 1929
 Thornburg, Mrs. Ross J., Des Moines, 1937
 Tillapaugh, Miss Iola, Cedar Rapids, 1942
 Tobin, John, Vinton, 1938
 Tonkin, George, Boston, Mass., '38
 Vane, Dr. Robt. F., U. S. Navy, '40
 Weber, Alois John, Keokuk, 1929
 Wilharm, Wanda M., Waterloo, '38
 Willis, Miss Myra G., Cedar Rapids, 1940
 Wolden, Mrs. B. O., Estherville, '39
 Wyth, J. G., Cedar Falls, 1932
 Young, Miss Mary H., Dubuque, 1940
 Youngs, Miss Sarah, Meadville, Mo., 1938
 Youngworth, Wm., Sioux City, '26

LIBRARIES*

- Carnegie-Stout Public Library, Dubuque, 1931
 Iowa State Traveling Library, Des Moines, 1940
 Kendall Young Library, Webster City, 1931
 Library, Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, 1939
 Library, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1931
 McGill University Library, Montreal, Que., 1932
 Public Library, Cedar Rapids, '31
 Public Library, Council Bluffs, '31
 Public Library, Des Moines, 1931
 Public Library, Fort Dodge, 1936
 Public Library, Sioux City, 1931
 Public Library, Vinton, 1938
 University of Illinois Library, Urbana, Ill., 1942

*Exchanges are not included in this list.